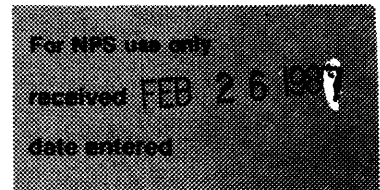


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**SITE** HN-4

**NAME** Thomas Ashcroft Ranch

**LOCATION** Approximately twenty miles west north-west of Buffalo, Harding County (063) South Dakota (046)

**OWNER** John R. Olson  
K/O Ranches Incorporated  
Box 53  
Ludlow, South Dakota 57755

**CLASSIFICATION** Buildings, private, NA acquisition, unoccupied, restricted access, agricultural

**DESCRIPTION** Very good condition, unaltered, original site

The Thomas Ashcroft Ranch is located on the floodplain of the South Fork of the Grand River about twenty miles east northeast of Buffalo, the Harding County seat. All of the buildings on the ranch were built around 1910 with the exception of two modern (non-contributing) buildings.

One of the most architecturally impressive houses in Harding County, the ranch house (contributing) is a two story, hipped-roof, ell plan stone house. Constructed in 1910 of fieldstone from the site, the house faces south overlooking the river. The front door has a round window above it in the second-story, and two large rectangular windows are in the southern end of the ell. The west facade has three windows in the ground-floor and one in the second-story. Two small double-hung windows are in the north facade in the hipped roof extension which is located on the north side of the house. A door is located in the west facade of the projection. The east facade has the same fenestral arrangement as the west facade. The roof is covered with corrugated metal with the exception of the projection which is covered with composition shingles.

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Three structures and a windmill are located in an arc near the house. West of the house is a windmill and a shed-roofed outbuilding (contributing). To the northwest is a small rock outbuilding (contributing) with a low pitched gable roof. Both of these outbuildings have been stuccoed and painted white to match the house. A root cellar (contributing) is located off the northwest corner of the house.

Situated in a roughly circular configuration on the west side of the driveway northwest of the house is a grouping of agricultural buildings. A shed-roofed rectangular wood-frame outbuilding (contributing) is the first structure in this spatial unit. To the north is a partially collapsed dugout (contributing). Northwest of the dugout is a large fieldstone foundation. To the west is a small wood-frame gabled-roof outbuilding (contributing). A Quonset hut (non-contributing) and a red wood-frame gabled-roof barn (contributing) are situated to the west. A corrugated metal (non-contributing) Butler building used for grain storage is located to the south. In a swale to the southwest is a one-and-one-half story small wood-frame gabled-roofed barn (contributing).

A large wood-framed hipped-roof barn (contributing) is located to the north of the other buildings. The roof is covered in corrugated metal.

Three structures are located north of the house on the east side of the driveway. Located farthest to the north is a wood-frame gabled-roof garage (contributing). The garage is stuccoed and the roof is covered with corrugated metal.

South of the garage is a wood-frame granary (contributing). The granary is shiplap that is painted red. The steeply pitched gable roof is covered with corrugated metal.

An elevated gasoline tank and small wood-frame outbuilding (contributing) are located south of the granary.

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**SIGNIFICANCE** 1900-present, settlement, architecture

**DATE:** 1910

**BUILDER:** Thomas Ashcroft

The Thomas Ashcroft ranch is significant in the areas of settlement and architecture because it typifies the kind of ranches that existed in western South Dakota in the early years of the twentieth century. The ranch house is important as an outstanding example of fieldstone construction which was a vernacular tradition in central Harding County.

The site is unusual because most of the buildings were built around the same time as the house, in 1910, and is in an excellent state of preservation. Historically, in the late 1800s a log house was built on the site of the present house by the Franklin Cattle Company which was located across the river to the south.

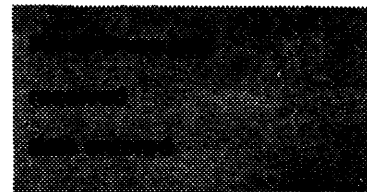
Thomas Ashcroft moved to the area from the Camp Crook region of Harding County where his family was first generation settlers. Early maps of the county dating from 1906 show the town of Ashcroft which was a few miles north of Camp Crook. His family emigrated from Canada to Dakota Territory. Although Ashcroft built a large house, he and his wife did not have any children.

In 1947 the ranch was sold to Claude and Inez Olson, who owned the property until it was recently sold to their son, John R. Olson, the present owner.

Noteworthy for its diversity of vernacular architectural styles, the Thomas Ashcroft ranch exhibits a full complement of outbuildings which are traditionally associated with turn-of-the-century northern Great Plains ranches. It is in excellent condition and an exemplary state of preservation.

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QUADRANGLE NAME Reva, NW SD

UTM 13/637090/5058940

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

ACREAGE About 6 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is bounded by the intersection of four imaginary lines. Bounded on the north by a line that lies ten feet from the north exterior wall of the hipped-roof barn which intersects a line that lies ten feet from the eastern exterior wall of the outbuilding near the gas tank which intersects a line that lies ten feet from the southern exterior wall of the house which lies ten feet from the western exterior wall of the small barn in the swale. The site is located in the NE quarter of the NE quarter of Section 27, Township 20 North, Range 7 East in Harding County, South Dakota.

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